

[20 April, 2001]

RAJYA SABHA

to reduce the adverse effect of import of edible on domestic price of edible oils and to protect the interests of palm growers.

Training of sniffer dogs

3797. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in order to locate the people below the debris in the recent disastrous earthquake in Gujarat, sniffer dogs came from abroad; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken by Government to train sniffer dogs in the country, to be used in such times of need?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Ministry of Agriculture has no such proposal.

Approach paper on food processing industry

3798. SHRI R. S. GAVAI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the approach paper on food processing industry;

(b) if so, whether Government propose to rationalise the tax structure for food processing industries;

(c) whether it is a fact that the food processing industry is presently under-utilising its installed capacity;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the measures adopted for full utilisation of the installed capacity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI TH. CHAOBA SINGH): (a) Department of Food Processing Industries (DFPI) organized four Regional Seminars at Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore and Lucknow to elicit regional inputs towards formulation of National Policy. Subsequently, a National Conference was also held at Delhi in this regard. Accordingly, a draft National Policy has since been drawn up.

(b) Rationalization of Tax Structure is a continuing process and Government has been taking measures in this regard from time-to-time. It has been proposed in the Budget 2001-2002 to bring down the current Excise Duty of 16% to Zero level for processed fruits and vegetables. It has also been proposed to give tax holiday for Industrial Estates.

(c) The present capacity utilization of processed food industry in general is low and in the case of fruits and vegetables, it is estimated to be around 50%. However, these capacity utilization estimates are only for the organised sector.

(d) Amongst the reasons, a major cause is expected to be low demand which makes the volumes far low for processed food industry and the cost of production is high. The consequent prices again result in low demand.

(e) The proposed National Food Processing Policy envisages creation of conducive environment and consumer awareness for the growth of this sector.